

POCKET PC EXPERT

FAQ

Q Having gone through the agony of waiting for all my old Pocket PC 2003 applications to be updated to work with Windows Mobile 5, the news that Windows Mobile 6 (codenamed Crossbow) is coming out in the next few months has me cringing. Will we have to go through the same process while developers try to adapt their software to the new OS?

A The transition to Windows Mobile 5 (WM5) was indeed a painful process, but it would seem Microsoft has learnt from it. Following its recent official announcement of Windows Mobile 6, the company confirmed that it uses the same (Windows CE5) underlying core as its predecessor. Microsoft also claimed that the "overwhelming majority of WM5 applications will run on WM6 devices without modification".

It also said this was part of its goals when it developed WM6, and that compatibility was heavily tested throughout the development process. In theory, then, there should be no problems using your WM5 applications on WM6.

Steve Clack

Handheld consultant, trainer and editor

pocketpc@computershopper.co.uk

Outlook on the Pocket PC

If you want all your contacts, appointments, tasks and notes on your handheld as well as your PC, Outlook's ActiveSync can help. **Steve Clack** explains how

Microsoft Outlook is a monster of a program that has grown to incorporate almost every conceivable calendaring function. Still, while it isn't the most intuitive PIM suite available, it has become an industry standard for business use.

If you're currently using the cut-down Outlook Express or some other non-Microsoft equivalent, we strongly recommend that you switch to the full version of Outlook, which comes free on CD with every Pocket PC. Once you've done this, ActiveSync will automatically synchronise all your names and addresses, appointments and to-do items between your handheld and desktop, together with everything you enter into the Pocket PC's built-in Notes application. It can also synchronise a subset of your Outlook emails, but there's more on that shortly.

If you plan to use Outlook at home or work, or both, the benefits are obvious. Even if you're not planning to become an active Outlook user, it's still useful to install the program, even if you take advantage of it only on an occasional basis. It means you can have all your contacts, appointments and so on visible on your PC desktop as well as your handheld. If you're still not convinced, remember that the PC's full-sized keyboard is a quicker way of entering information. Even if you still plan to use your PDA as the sole means of entering and viewing addresses, appointments, tasks and notes, you'll be able to use Outlook's comprehensive printing capabilities to create hard copies of your to-do lists and notes, or perhaps a calendar of monthly appointments that you can give to your partner.

GETTING STARTED

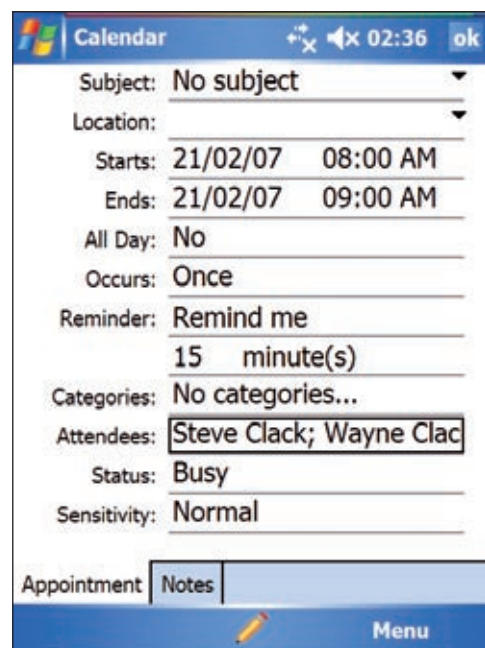
Outlook is normally installed as part of the ActiveSync setup from your Pocket PC installation CD. But if you installed ActiveSync via some other means, it's a simple matter of getting the disc that came with your handheld and following the onscreen setup instructions. Once installed, go to the Option menu item (under Tools) within the ActiveSync status window and tick the corresponding boxes for the items you want to synchronise: Contacts, Calendar, E-mail, Tasks and Notes. The next time you connect via ActiveSync, all the corresponding data types on your Pocket PC will be copied to the desktop and will appear in Outlook.

The synchronisation is a proper, two-way affair, so you can add any number of entries into both your handheld and your PC between syncs, and they'll all be transferred between the two the next time you connect up. In the event that any of your additions, edits or deletions conflict between your Pocket PC and Outlook on the desktop, you'll get a warning during the synchronisation process so you can manually decide which change is the correct one.

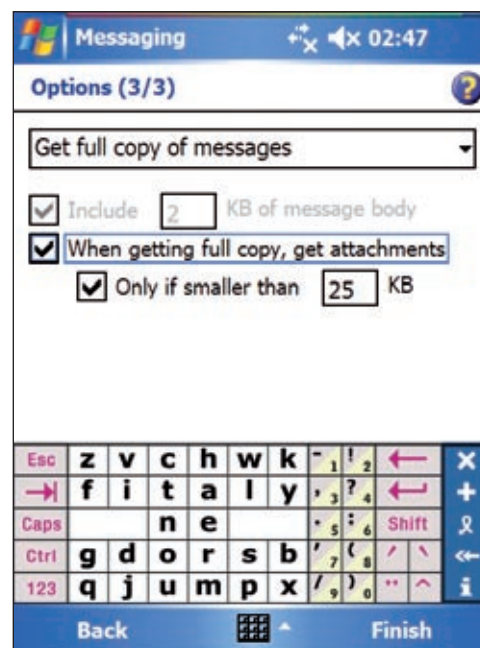
GOING TO WORK

If you already use Outlook at work, and provided your employer allows you to connect a personal device to your office PC, you'll be able to access all your office Outlook data on the handheld.

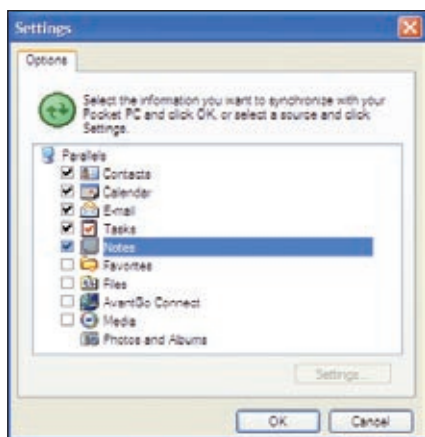
If you're working in an office that's running Microsoft Exchange Server, you'll be able to synchronise your Pocket PC with Outlook via the network. WiFi syncing directly through ActiveSync was disabled in



▲ Any entries added to your PDA calendar will be automatically transferred to your Outlook calendar



▲ Synchronise your PDA with your inbox to record messages. Untick the box if you get lots of attachments



▲ Open ActiveSync and select Options to choose which components of Outlook are synchronised



▲ Keep on top of your appointments by synchronising your calendar with Outlook

version 4 for security reasons, but it's still possible to do it through a wireless network via Exchange Server, and your IT department should be able to set it up for you. You can even sync with Exchange Server remotely, if you have access to a suitable wireless connection such as a WiFi hotspot or a 3G/GPRS phone connection.

However, some of Outlook's advanced features aren't mirrored in the Pocket PC PIM suite. Some of the data fields you might enter on your desktop may not be visible on the handheld. The information isn't lost; it's still present in Outlook, even though it doesn't get synced to your Pocket PC. Furthermore, everything you enter on your handheld is reproduced on the PC.

A useful advanced feature of Outlook on the desktop that is fully supported on your handheld is 'meeting requests'. When you set up an appointment on the Pocket PC, scroll down to the Attendees line of the appointment entry screen and tap on Add to bring in as many names as you like from your Contacts database. The next time you sync, Microsoft Exchange server will distribute meeting request emails to all the attendees on your distribution list in the usual way. When they respond, the replies are transmitted back to the handheld at the next sync, and your calendar updated accordingly.

USING MULTIPLE PCs

It's OK to sync your Pocket PC with more than one PC, and you can set up ActiveSync to sync only specific types of information with each computer. Any conflicts that result from updating the same data in more than one place between ActiveSync sessions should be flagged as soon as you connect, allowing you to choose which version of the data is correct.

Any categories of data you choose to sync between multiple computers will be updated so they are identical across all of them. So if you sync your Contacts database with your home and office PCs, all your personal contact details from your handheld will be copied over to your office PC the first time you connect to it, at which time all your work contacts from your office copy of Outlook will be copied over to your handheld. The next time you sync back to your home PC, all the office contacts from the handheld will be copied to that.

There is an exception: you must synchronise your email (Inbox) with one PC only. Otherwise, you'll mess up the email system on both computers. Remove the tick from the E-mail box under the ActiveSync options screen before making your first ActiveSync connection to the PC with which you won't be syncing your emails.

SWAPPING NOTES

Entries from your Pocket PC Notes application are handled a little differently. Only those notes that have been saved into the Pocket PC's My Documents folder (or any subfolder within it) will be transferred across to Outlook's own Notes section. Any scribbled sketches or handwritten text will be faithfully preserved in Outlook as WMF pictures, and any notes entered on your PC will be synchronised back to the handheld in the usual way.

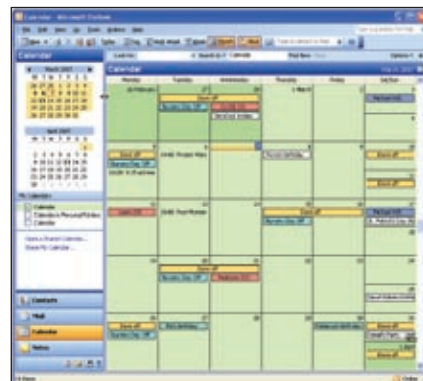
EMAIL ON THE MOVE

As mentioned above, it's also possible to keep certain elements of your desktop Outlook emails synchronised with your handheld, but it's important to understand exactly what you can and can't do. By default, only your inbox and outbox will be synced between the handheld and PC, but you can change this to include subfolders beneath your inbox as well. The easiest way to set it up (regardless of which version of Outlook you're using) is to connect your handheld to the PC, then from the ActiveSync window double-click on the Inbox or E-mail line, which will bring up a dialog from where you can simply select the folders you want to sync. If the Inbox or E-mail line isn't already displayed, just go into ActiveSync's View menu and choose 'Details' to expand the dialog box first.

No matter how you set things up, though, you can't force your Pocket PC to mimic your entire Outlook email folder structure. The synchronisation process will copy only new messages from your Outlook (or Exchange Server) inbox, plus any subfolders you've specified, over to your handheld. Any messages you've composed on your Pocket PC and not yet sent will be copied across to Outlook and sent from there. Any messages you've deleted from the handheld since the last sync will also be moved to Outlook's Deleted folder.

The default settings on your handheld are set to synchronise only recent messages, to ignore attachments, and to grab only the first few kilobytes of each message. These settings can all be changed from within the individual email account settings on your handheld, on an account-by-account basis.

Finally, if you want to send copies of individual appointments, tasks, addresses or notes to other Pocket PC users, you can do this most easily via infrared. Just tap and hold on the relevant item (you'll need to be in the relevant list view rather than editing mode to do it) and choose Beam... from the pop-up contextual menu. ☐



▲ Gain the functionality of Outlook's calendar on your PDA

Keeping pace Windows Mobile 5 seems slower

Q I recently upgraded to a Windows Mobile 5 handheld, but in operation it's not as speedy as the older device it replaced, even though the processor speed of the new one is faster. There are often noticeable pauses when I'm switching between applications or between tabs in the Settings screen, none of which were present with my Pocket PC 2003 handheld. Is there some logical explanation for this, or is there a fault with my new device that needs fixing?

A Actually, the slight lag in response that you're experiencing isn't related to Windows Mobile 5 (WM5) – at least, not directly. WM5 was the first version of the Pocket PC operating system to support non-volatile memory, which doesn't need to be powered to keep its contents live.

The big advantage of non-volatile memory is that if the batteries go flat you shouldn't lose any of your data. This type of memory is also

cheaper, so manufacturers have jumped at the chance to switch to it. As a result, most WM5 devices are fitted with this new-style memory. The downside is that it doesn't respond as quickly as the older volatile memory.

Unfortunately, there's nothing you can do to change this behaviour directly. However, many Pocket PCs now have variable processor speed settings, so you may be able to switch your processor to run at a faster-than-default speed, which should help to counteract the speed reduction caused by the non-volatile memory. To do this, go to the System tab of the Settings screen (accessed from the Start menu) and tap on the Power icon. If the option to change processor speed exists for your model of handheld, it'll be under a tab labelled Processor along the bottom of the screen.

Increasing the processor speed can reduce battery life enormously (perhaps by as much as half), so be sure to change it back down again if you're planning to be away from your mains charger for an extended period.